

# Cochlear Implant Support Program. Criteria for upgrade to Cochlear Nucleus 6 and Nucleus 7 speech processors

(Updated May 2018)

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## Background:

Australian Hearing receives a fixed allocation to provide services to eligible cochlear implantees. The Cochlear Implant Support Program has two components:

1. Repairs and maintenance for all eligible clients who have a cochlear implant
  - a. Young Australians under 26 years of age
  - b. Australians aged 26 years and older who are eligible for the Office of Hearing Services Community Service Obligation program, the majority of whom are aged over 65 years.
2. Replacement and upgrade of speech processors for Young Australians under 26 years of age.

## Funding priority:

The first priority of the cochlear implant support program is to ensure that clients who use a cochlear implant are kept “on-air” by

- Providing repairs, replacement parts and batteries necessary to keep the speech processor working.
- Replacing speech processors that are lost or no longer able to be repaired (clients under 26 years only).

The second priority is to provide access to newer technology, when this technology provides improved perception of speech for the listener. New speech processor technology may also offer a range of features that may improve comfort, convenience or ease of use; however the focus of the upgrade program is on improving access to spoken language.

The Nucleus 7 speech processor has signal processing features that are very similar to the Nucleus 6 speech processor, differing mainly in connectivity through its “made for iPhone” feature and the ability to “find my speech processor” and adjust some settings using the Nucleus Smart App.

**Therefore the upgrade program continues to prioritise children and young adults who have the Nucleus 5 or older models of speech processor.**

The criteria below take into account research findings, clinical information obtained from consultation with cochlear implant clinic representatives from each state, demographics of eligible cochlear implantees and the funding that is available to provide speech processors.

## Criteria for upgrade (clients less than 26 years of age) – updated April 2018

Clients who have a working speech processor may only apply for an upgraded speech processor if they have a **Nucleus 5 (CP810) or earlier model of speech processor**, and meet one of the criteria listed below.

1. Clients under 26 years of age whose speech processor was fitted more than 5 years ago.
2. Clients aged from 5 years to less than 11 years of age, who have a speech processor that was fitted more than 4 years ago and who meet the general criteria listed below.
3. Clients aged 11 to less than 25 years, who have a speech processor that was fitted more than 4 years ago, and who have *significant intellectual delay or physical disabilities* (such as cerebral palsy) that prevent them from changing listening programs, and who meet the general criteria listed below.
4. Young adults aged from 25 to less than 26 years, who have a speech processor that was fitted more than 3 years ago and who meet the general criteria listed below.

The Nucleus 7 speech processor is currently compatible with the following implants: CI24RE Series, CI500 Series and Profile Series. Clients who have been implanted with other implants can access the Nucleus 6 speech processor as an upgrade.

The Kanso speech processor is not part of the upgrade program.

### General criteria

All Applicants must:

- a. Be eligible Australian Hearing clients who have a valid Hearing Services Card
- b. Consistently use their current speech processor
- c. Be regularly in an environment that contains high levels of background noise and where they are required to interact with multiple speakers (i.e. a Roger or FM system will not enable them to hear key speech input).
- d. Have assessment results which show that they gain significant speech discrimination in quiet from their current speech processor. Suitable assessments include a speech discrimination test that is conducted using hearing alone at conversational levels, or the Parent Evaluation of Auditory-oral performance in Children (PEACH). These are conducted by the cochlear implant clinician.

*This document will be reviewed in December 2018*